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THE ROLE OF THE N.Y. STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DIVISION OF INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS IN PROMOTING EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY, A SUMMARY.

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THIS PAPER OUTLINES RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIVISION OF INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS UNDER THE EDUCATION PRACTICES ACT OF 1948. THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THE ACT WAS TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATORY COLLEGE ADMISSION POLICIES, BUT IT HAS SINCE BEEN WIDENED TO INCLUDE A RESPONSIBILITY FOR EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND RACIAL BALANCE AT ALL SCHOOL LEVELS. THIS AGENCY ADMINISTERS THE LEGISLATIVE ALLOCATIONS WHICH ARE GIVEN TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO HELP PAY THE EXTRA COSTS INVOLVED IN DESEGREGATING SCHOOLS. IN ADDITION, THE AGENCY OFFERS (1) CONSULTATIVE SERVICES FOR DEVELOPING CURRICULUMS WHICH INCORPORATE CONTENT ON MINORITY GROUPS IN AMERICAN LIFE AND HISTORY, (2) INSERVICE TRAINING IN INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS, AND (3) SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COOPERATION PROGRAMS. THE AGENCY CONDUCTS CENSUS SURVEYS OF THE RACIAL COMPOSITION OF SCHOOLS. IT ALSO HAS PUBLISHED THREE HANDBOOKS ON INTERGROUP RELATIONS FOR TEACHERS. THIS PAPER WAS PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA'S CITIES, SPONSORED BY THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS, WASHINGTON, D.C., NOVEMBER 16-18, 1967. (NH)

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THE ROLE OF THE N.Y. STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DIVISION OF INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS IN PROMOTING EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

A SUMMARY

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For The
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In America's Cities

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

In 1948, the New York State Legislature passed the Education Practices Act which recognized "that the American ideal of equality of opportunity requires that students, otherwise qualified, be admitted to educational institutions without regard to race, color, religion, creed or national origin" with certain exceptions for religious institutions. The Administrator of the Act is a member of the State Education Department and is directly responsible to the Commissioner of Education.

This Act brought about the virtual elimination in college admissions of discrimination on religious grounds, against which the act had been primarily aimed. In the course of administering the act, it became painfully evident that certain minority group students, notably Negroes, were present in only very small numbers.

In January of 1957 the Board of Regents approved the establishment of a Division of Intercultural Relations in Education. Included within the Division are the responsibilities of the Education Department under the Education Practices Act. In addition, the Division furnishes consultative and advisory services to local school officials so that the schools may provide equality of educational opportunity to every child and youth regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin.

In January 1960 the Board of Regents issued its historic policy statement declaring that education in schools which are segregated by law or in fact is "socially unrealistic, blocks the attainment of the goals of democratic education, and is wasteful of manpower and talent...."

In November 1961 the Division of Intercultural Relations conducted a racial census of the elementary schools of the State which showed that of 2611 school buildings, 54% had no Negroes, 46% had some Negroes, but that about 5% had 50% or more Negro enrollment.

In June 1962 an Advisory Committee developed a statement of principles for dealing with racial imbalance in the schools which was distributed to all school districts.

In June 1963 the Commissioner requested each school district to submit to him a statement concerning the number of schools having more than 50% Negro pupils, a statement of policy with respect to achieving and maintaning racial balance in the district, a progress report and a cost estimate for carrying out its plan for eliminating racial imbalance.

Efforts at desegregation met with considerable resistance through legal action and in other ways. Citizens seeking the elimination of segregation have petitioned the Commissioner, under the provisions of the State Education Law, to bring it about in their district. The Commissioner's decision in such appeals have the force of law and have been upheld by the courts.

Racial censuses in October 1966 and October 1967 show that the problem of defacto segregation is growing, although more schools than formerly contain some Negro pupils. The October 1966 figures make possible accurate determinations of the numbers of schools that vary above or below the district's average Negro percentage by a given number of percentage points. These annual censuses will be the basis for continuing action toward eliminating racial imbalance.

In 1966 the Legislature appropriated $1,000,000 and in 1967, $3,000,000, to assist school districts in paying the excess costs involved in solving problems of desegregation. The Division of Intercultural Relations administers this fund along with its other functions described below.

DIVISION OF INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS

The Division of Intercultural Relations in Education:

- Provides advisory and consultative services to local school officials on courses of action designed to eliminate racial imbalance.

- Administers funds appropriated by the State Legislature to assist school districts in defraying excess costs in solving problems of racial imbalance.

- Provides consultative services to school personnel on developing curriculums which incorporate understanding of the contributions of minority groups to American life and history.

- Publishes Intergroup Relations Handbooks for teachers. Prepares and distributes bibliographies of books, pamphlets, and visual aid materials, and lends films dealing with intergroup understanding.

- Provides consultative services on inservice training for school personnel. Conducts workshops for the development of materials and methods for teaching all children respect for the inherent worth of other human beings and an understanding and appreciation of racial and cultural diversity.

- Provides assistance for surveys and studies to determine the extent to which equal educational opportunities are available to school children of different racial and cultural backgrounds.

- Cooperates with other public and private agencies concerned with the improvement of intergroup relations in a community.

- Provides consultation and assistance to school districts in developing programs for school-community cooperation.

<u>Publications</u>

The Division has published three Intergroup Relations Handbooks for teachers.

These are:

Intergroup Relations: A Resource Handbook for Elementary School Teachers, Grades K-3, 1967.

Intergroup Relations: A Resource Handbook for 12 Grade Social Studies, 1965.

Intergroup Relations: A Resource Handbook for Elementary School Teachers, Grades 4, 5 and 6, 1963.

Intergroup Relations: A Resource Handbook for Junior High School Teachers - in preparation.

Bibliographies of books, pamphlets, visual aid materials and films for inservice training to promote intergroup understanding are prepared and distributed.

A Traveling Exhibit of sample copies of multi-ethnic instructional materials is in preparation. The exhibit will be on loan to school districts with few if any minority group students to acquaint the faculty with materials which can be incorporated into the curriculum dessigned to bring about an understanding of the contribution of minority groups to American life and history.

Field Services

The Division provides consultative services on Equal Educational Opportunity and desegration like the following:

Pilot workshops of New York State Teachers Association Equal Educational Opportunity Project. In this activity workshops are conducted at the Annual NYSTA Zone Conferences on Intercultural Instructional Materials for Classroom use.

Local school committees are helped to plan inservice training programs in Intergroup Understanding for all teachers in the District.

We work with school administrative staff in helping define the role of the chief school administrator in bringing about school desegregation.

Local school district advisory committees are assisted in developing programs to improve school-community relationships and to build community support for educational change.

We give assistance to local school committees responsible for developing materials to include information about minority groups in various subject areas.

We consult with districts in which school problems have developed because of desegregation.

We review Title I proposals of districts to ensure that programs are consistent with State policy on racial integration.

We participate in the programs of numerous professional educational agencies concerned with improving intergroup relations in their areas of responsibility.

As one phase of the Title IV Grant under The 1964 Civil Rights Act Provisions, we are working with a statewide advisory committe to develop guidelines and criteria to determine new ways of organizing the school and classroon for instructional quality in desegregated situations.

Financial Assistance to School Districts

In 1966 the State Legislature appropriated $1,000,000 to the Education Department for assisting school districts in paying the excess costs involved in solving problems of desegregation. In 1967 the appropriation was increased to $3,000,000, although in each year the amount requested was $5,000,000.

Guidelines were establihsed for the administration of the fund and to help districts in preparing their requests for assistance. The projects for which aid from this fund has been granted reflect the varied needs of the districts.

Integration, while distinguished from desegregation, cannot be separated from it. Both make up the total approach to a more meaningful education. We, therefore, also considered for State Aid those projects aimed at developing attitudes, understanding and behavior toward others who are different, in consonance with our democratic precepts. Some of the projects approved for aid the past two years include:

- special advisory and consultative services to help school officials make plans for eliminating racial imbalance
- rental of relocatable classrooms to make possible school reorganizations that improve racial balance
- transportation in order to improve racial balance

- establishment of offices of integration to coordinate activities that promote racial balance
- urban-suburban pupil exchanges
- inservice training for school personnel
- curriculum development to incorporate appreciation and understanding of the contributions of minority group peoples to American life and history
- development of school-community understanding in support of school integration plans
- racially integrated pupil activities, after school hours and during regular school hours.
- establishment of resource centers for integrated materials
- after school integrated tutorial programs
- efforts to prevent a transitional school from becoming a segregated school
- additional educational aides and special services to desegregated schools to help raise the level of the under-achievers, and to help them adjust to their new integrated setting.
- help raise the self-image of "disenfranchised" minority group children by bringing them in contact with prominent adult personalities of their own ethnic group and, at the same time, weakening the stereotype images held by "majority" group children
- some minor renovation of a school building, to accommodate the change resulting from racial balance
- integrated textbooks and other materials
- aiding a "Reverse Open Enrollment Program" to encourage the voluntary movement of white children into Negro and Puerto Rican schools.
- improving quality integrated education in community zoned schools
- an experimental program to reduce racial imbalance within classes through the introduction of heterogeneous groupings
- improving quality integrated education in certain "receiving" schools

- reduction of class size in newly integrated classes
- prepare children and community for the physical integrated of schools
- support of a cooperative arrangement between a city school district and a local university to establish a public school on the university campus for diversified city children
- support of a summer school program in which inner-city children attended suburban schools
- establishing evening neighborhood study centers under supervision of teachers

Some districts have reported that without the financial assistance granted certain programs could not have succeeded or been undertaken. Others have reported a reduction of community tensions and increased acceptance of racial integration as necessary for quality education in 1967.

Cooperative Review Service

"The Cooperative Review Service is a partnership effort of the State Education Department and participating local school systems throughout the State. It focuses principle attention on the teaching and learning process with the primary emphasis on the adequacy of the curriculum; training experience and effectiveness of the instructional staff; the quality of school libraries, laboratories, and resource materials; and the extent to which the talents of all pupils are discovered and encouraged. The basic aim of the Cooperative Review Service is to raise the quality of instruction in the school and to advance the opportunities available to all pupils for better learning."

From the standpoint of the Division of Intercultural Relations in Education, the objectives of the Cooperative Review Sercice are specifically as follows:

1. To examine closely the extent of racial integration in the the schools and in the program of the district under study. To assess any problems related thereto.

2. To provide the school district with information and services in order to assist in the resolution of such problems. To examine the extent to which the curriculum for all grades contains accurate information on contributions of Negroes and other "minorities" to the development of American life and culture.

3. To suggest programs and projects to school personnel that will help them to develop in young persons positive attitudes toward all racial, cultural, and ethnic groups that make up our state, nation, and world.

4. To encourage school officials seriously to consider proposals that lead to the elimination of racial imbalance where it exists and to the development of a school curriculum in which intercultural relations understanding is an integral part.

5. To examine the extent of staff integration in the particular school under study and to discuss with school officials, in all types of schools, the desirability of a culturally diverse staff.

6. To examine texts, library collections (both school and classroom), periodicals, and other supplementary reading materials used in the school to ascertain the extent to which these materials lend themselves to the development of positive intercultural concepts.

7. To acquaint school officials and faculty members with the materials and services of the Divsion of Intercultural Relations, State Education Department, especially as these materials and services relate to the educational enrichment of the staff.

8. To seek to establish a dialogue between the chief schod administrator of the area or region under study and the Division of Intercultural Relations relative to the development of some programs of Intercultural relations for every child in every school, regardless of the ethnic composition of the particular area or region.

Urban Education

A Statement of Policy and Action on Urban Education is being developed by the Board of Regents and its adoption seems imminent. A summary of its provisions will be given orally if time allows.

Teacher Preparation

As a concomitant of its responsibilities for the Education Practices Act

the Division of Intercultural Relations in Education has undertaken a cooperative effort with the Division of Higher Education and Teacher Education and Certification aimed at making teacher preparation more effective for education in an urban or desegregated setting.

Puerto Rican Pupils

The Division is cooperating with representative Puerto Ricans in developing greater understanding of Puerto Rican pupils which are unique to them as a cultural group.